

AN: This is it, everyone. The climax of *Poison*! This is what the twelve previous stories have all been leading up to. Since I left you on a terrible cliffhanger, I'll keep this author's note brief. See you at the end!

Poison

Partner

The gunshot didn't hit TPYMK.

Bang!

Death barely had time to react as the bullet whizzed past him, striking the person who was standing beside.

Nala.

The bullet tore right through her chest, causing the lioness cub to gasp in shock. She stumbled backwards, clutching her paws to her torso. She was unable to keep the blood from spilling out of the wound like an open sewer.

She stared with wide eyes at Sarafina, who had fired the bullet at her. It was as if she expected mercy from the lioness.

Instead, Sarafina shot three more bullets at her.

Nala collapsed to the floor, dead. The blood seemed to match well with the tiled floor, which was of a similar colour.

TPYMK could only look on in bemusement. *What the hell...?*

Sarafina was supposed to be on *their* side, right? At least, that's what he thought...

Once she made sure that Nala was well and truly deceased, she aimed the gun at Death's head.

"Stay right there," she warned, "or I'll blow your brains out."

Death held up his forepaws, as if he were surrendering.

"Well, this is unexpected," the drug lord said.

"Sarafina, what the hell are you doing?" TPYMK asked. He was left wondering why he hadn't been shot yet. Not that he was complaining, of course...

"Helping you," Sarafina replied, taking a careful step backwards. Using her free paw, she severed the ropes that bound the detective to the chair, freeing him. "Or do you want me to shoot you, too?"

"Not at all," TPYMK replied, hopping to his feet and joining Sarafina by her side. "Now, would you mind explaining things to me - like why you wanted to work with that scumbag in the first place?"

"Because I knew it would lead us right to him," Sarafina said, staring intently at Death, holding the gun steadily.

"What, so the whole thing with you slashing me across the face and pushing me across the desert was part of your plan?" TPYMK said.

"Yep," Sarafina said.

"Why didn't you let me in on it?" TPYMK questioned. "I could've *faked* being hurt, you know."

"Anyone could've been watching," Sarafina said. "You know what this little rat is like. So I kept my mouth shut. That way, they didn't suspect a thing."

"You're a lot smarter than I thought," TPYMK told her. "That's a brilliant plan. Genius, actually."

"Thank you," Sarafina said, smiling. "Now all that's left is *him*."

The two stared at Death, who seemed strangely compliant.

"So what do we do?" the lioness asked. "Break his legs and give him to the police or just shoot him right now? I vote for the latter."

"Why?" said TPYMK.

"He doesn't deserve to live," Sarafina said. "Think of all those people who are addicted to drugs. Because of him. He's a monster. Let's just blow his brains all over the wall."

"Yeah," TPYMK agreed. "You have a point there."

"Let's not be too hasty," Death said, sounding as though he was finally going to try and defend himself. "I'm sure there must be something I can do to appease you."

"The only thing that'll appease me is seeing you six feet under the ground," TPYMK retorted.

"I can give you money," Death offered. "As much as you want."

"We don't want your drug money," Sarafina spat. "You can keep talking all you like, but you won't change our minds."

Death chuckled. "Probably not," the drug lord said. "But *he* might."

And Sarafina suddenly felt the cold end of a gun being pressed against her head.

"Put the gun down," Wazimu ordered.

TPYMK stared at his former friend. He was holding the detective's own gun, which Sarafina had placed on the floor after taking it from him. That was obviously a costly mistake...

"Wazimu, you don't have to do this," TPYMK said.

"I have nothing else to do," Wazimu replied. "I just want what I deserve."

"A kick in the nuts?" Sarafina said.

Wazimu shoved Sarafina hard, sending her onto the floor. The gun she was holding skidded out of her reach, sliding underneath a nearby worktable.

Now she was without a weapon.

Wazimu aimed the gun at Sarafina. "What do I do now?" he asked Death.

TPYMK noticed that the chemist's paws were shaking. Clearly, he'd never used a gun before. Maybe that could work to their advantage, somehow...

"Just kill them," Death said. "And do it quickly."

"I wish you were able to do that," TPYMK said.

"What are you talking about?" asked Wazimu.

"That gun isn't loaded," TPYMK said.

"What? Of course it is," Wazimu said. "It's your gun."

"It's empty, though," TPYMK insisted. "I was never gonna use it. It's just good for threatening people."

"You're lying," Wazimu said.

"He's lying," Death said. "Just shoot him."

Wazimu aimed the gun at TPYMK's forehead. "I'm warning you," he said. "I will kill you."

"No, you won't," TPYMK said. "I bet you don't even have the guts to do it."

TPYMK looked down at Sarafina, giving her a wink.

She smiled, understanding what he was doing.

"I can do anything you can," Wazimu proclaimed. "I could just shoot you right now and..."

As the two argued, Sarafina slowly extricated herself from the scene, carefully backing away. She kept a close eye on Death as she reached the worktable, making sure that he wasn't looking. Luckily, it didn't seem that way. He was just watching TPYMK and Wazimu as they continued to squabble...

Quietly, Sarafina reached under the worktable with a paw, searching for the gun which she had lost.

Come on... come on...

Finally, Sarafina felt her claws take hold of the pistol. She grabbed it, swiftly rising to her paws in order to kill Death.

Only for Wazimu to shoot her instead.

"No!"

Sarafina dropped the gun, collapsing to the floor.

She had been shot in the foreleg. Luckily, the wound wasn't fatal. She was still in shock, though.

"You idiot!" Death snapped, taking the pistol from Wazimu. "You can't even aim properly!"

"Good thing I can," TPYMK retorted, leaping at Death as he attempted to shoot Sarafina.

Bang!

The shot scraped past the lioness's shoulder. She gasped in surprise, curling up into a ball, terrified.

But her grip on the gun never loosened.

TPYMK tackled Death to the floor. The lion dropped the gun, instead attempting to kill the detective with his own set of claws.

"I've had enough of you," Death snarled.

TPYMK kicked the lion hard in the stomach. He cried out in pain, as the detective threw him to the side.

TPYMK climbed to his feet, only for Death to launch himself at him again.

The detective was sent flying back against a worktop that lined the nearby wall, knocking test tubes and paper folders all over the place.

The detective tried to push Death away, who was going straight for the throat.

The method didn't matter now. He just wanted TPYMK dead. Plain and simple.

But TPYMK would be damned if he was going to let that happen.

"You're too late, Detective," Death gloated, pinning him down against the worktop with all his strength. "*Far* too late."

TPYMK reached out with his arm, grabbing the first thing on the worktop that he could find.

Three syringes.

The detective lashed out at Death, stabbing him in the shoulder with the syringes. The drug lord howled in pain, backing away from TPYMK.

TPYMK realised that the syringes were filled with a clear purple liquid.

"*Gah... Argh... Ugh...*"

Death fell to his knees in agony. TPYMK had obviously pressed down on the syringes, injecting the lion with their contents in the process.

"No... No... No..."

Death rolled onto his back, unable to take any more pain.

He stopped breathing. He stopped moving. He stopped doing anything.

He was dead.

TPYMK sighed in relief, crouching down to check the label on the syringes that were sticking out of Death's shoulder.

'Kifo'.

"Death by death," TPYMK commented, smirking.

He'd won.

The detective was about to go and check on Sarafina—

—when he realised that Wazimu was pointing a gun at him.

"Say goodbye," the chemist said.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

TPYMK recoiled as blood spurted from three holes in Wazimu's chest, staining his trenchcoat with the unpleasant liquid.

The chemist tumbled to the floor, dead within seconds.

Sarafina was revealed standing behind him, shakily holding the gun.

"Are you okay?" she asked, still trembling from being shot.

TPYMK looked around the empty lab. Stared at the dead bodies of Nala, Wazimu and Death.

And then he nodded.

"Yeah," he said. "I'm... I'm good."

Sarafina dropped the gun. "Great," she said. "Great..."

TPYMK noticed the nasty gunshot wound on her foreleg. "We'd better find a bandage for that," he said.

"Yeah," Sarafina said. "I think that'd be the best thing to do. After all, the last thing I want now is to bleed to death."

Five minutes later, TPYMK had finished wrapping a bandage around Sarafina's injured foreleg.

"There we go," he said, standing up. "You should be all right for now."

"It feels better already," Sarafina said. "So... what now?"

"We need to make sure that nobody ever comes here again," he explained. "The last thing we want is more people starting up a Sumu production line again."

"But all those dealers," Sarafina said. "All around the world. They still have their stashes."

"If they want to keep selling their stashes, then fine," TPYMK said. "But there's only so much to go around. There won't be any new Sumu being produced. Once it's all used up, there'll be nothing left for them to sell. No more Sumu."

"So what do we do about this place?" Sarafina asked.

TPYMK smiled at her. "I think you know what we have to do."

Sarafina smiled back.

The detective and the lioness went to work.

They scoured the lab, finding all of the liquid chemicals they could – which was a lot – and spilling them all over the place.

Their flammability was impressive.

Within seconds, the entire lab was set alight. All of the equipment slowly burning away into ash. Months after months of hard work by Death was being destroyed in an instant. The entire foundation of the Sumu operation crumbled away into nothingness.

And that was very good indeed.

TPYMK and Sarafina were stood at a safe distance, watching the Sumu lab burning from afar.

They revelled in every second of the sight.

"Good riddance," Sarafina said, a smile on her face. "We won't have to deal with that stupid drug ever again."

TPYMK smiled at her. "So you're not even tempted to use again?"

Sarafina looked up at him, shaking her head. "Nope," she said. "I don't even feel like smoking a joint."

The lioness spoke the truth. The cravings had completely disappeared by now. She didn't feel any sort of inclination or urge to take Sumu, or any other kind of drug.

For once – the first time in her life, actually – she felt... pure.

"That's good to hear," TPYMK told her. "I think this could be the start of something beautiful, Sarafina."

"I guess so, Detective Dumbo," she said, although the nickname was used in a more loving way this time. "But you might want to burn that pile of Sumu first."

The detective and the lioness turned around—

—to look at an enormous pile of plastic bags that were filled with an inordinate quantity of Sumu.

Before burning the lab, TPYMK had insisted that Sarafina find all the remaining bags of Sumu stored there, and to pile them up outside. She had no idea what he wanted her to do it for, though... Wouldn't it be easier to just burn it all along with the lab?

"Yeah," TPYMK said, staring up at the huge pile. "That's quite a lot of Sumu."

"Why did you make me bring it out here?" Sarafina questioned. "We should have just burned it inside – like with the other stuff."

"It's a celebration," TPYMK said, prompting a confused look from the lioness.

"Of what?"

"You getting clean."

TPYMK pulled a lighter out of his pocket, holding it out for Sarafina to take.

"Would you do the honours?"

Sarafina slowly reached out with a paw, taking the lighter from TPYMK. She ignited it, staring at the tiny flame.

"We could be rich, you know," TPYMK said, looking into her eyes. "Sell all that Sumu and we'd have more money than we could count."

"Yeah." Sarafina smiled. "I know."

And she tossed the lighter onto the pile.

TPYMK and Sarafina then turned around, walking away from the burning pile of Sumu.

They didn't look back.

Not once.

"So..."

Sarafina glanced around awkwardly, stood by the edge of the river with TPYMK. The place where they had first met. It felt like such a long time ago now...

"I guess this is goodbye, then," Sarafina said.

"Goodbye?" TPYMK raised his eyebrows, almost looking saddened.

"Well... yeah," Sarafina said. "Sumu's gone. All the users have probably turned tail and run off to someplace far away. I guess it's time for me to move on."

"And by move on you mean...?"

"Find someplace to stay," Sarafina replied. "Get a mate. Maybe start a family... The usual. I think I'd like that."

"You'll be a great mother," TPYMK complimented with a smile. "I'm sure of it."

"What about you, though?" Sarafina asked. "What will you do?"

"Oh... you know me," TPYMK said, shrugging. "Buy another house. Find something else to do. Alone."

"Alone?" Sarafina looked concerned.

"Yeah." TPYMK nodded. "It's better that way. Really."

He tipped his fedora hat to her.

"Goodbye, Sarafina."

With that, the detective turned around and walked away, leaving Sarafina by the riverside.

Sarafina never spotted him wiping a tear from his eye...

TPYMK walked down a long empty road that snaked along the edge of the jungle, hoping that he would be able to find a hotel sooner or later. There had to be one nearby, and he didn't like the sound of sleeping out on the streets...

Tears were streaming down his cheeks, but he wiped them away. He didn't want to show his emotions to anyone.

He continued walking. Down the empty, silent road.

Alone.

"Hey!"

The detective stopped upon hearing the voice.

He slowly turned around—

—and found Sarafina stood a few feet away from him.

"What are you doing here?" the detective asked, as the lioness gently padded over to him. "I thought you going to 'move on'?"

"Yeah," Sarafina said, smiling warmly at the detective. "I do want to move on. With *you*."

TPYMK just smiled.

Sarafina didn't need to say anything more.

"Come on," the detective said. "Let's go home."

TPYMK and Sarafina walked off down the road. Happy that they had both finally found someone they could relate to.

Each other.

And, as the two strode off into the setting sun, they couldn't have asked for anything more than that.

The End

AN: And that's it from *Poison*. Death is dead, the lab is a smouldering wreck, and the Sumu trade is finally over. I'm sure you could find some romantic connotations in that ending scene between TPYMK and Sarafina – but I will say nothing and just leave it open to interpretation. I know how you fangirls like to speculate...

Anyway, this has been a very fun experience. I've never tackled the theme of drugs before, so, for a first effort, I think it turned out pretty darn good! It felt like a true drama to me. And that's what I wanted from it. Hooray for me! I feel satisfied!

But do you? I'd love to hear your final thoughts on the *Poison* series, so start writing those reviews! Or don't. I have psychic powers, anyway. It doesn't matter. But if you do, then I'll be very grateful indeed.

So, all I can say now is goodbye, thank you for reading, and stay away from drugs.

Take care,

—ThatPersonYouMightKnow